SOAR365 Volunteer News & Updates

When you volunteer with SOAR365, you support our mission to create life-fulfilling opportunities for people with disabilities! Check out our opportunities below and resolve to make a difference in the lives of the people we serve!

Become a Volunteer!

Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Olyn Warfield!

As a poet, author, and fantasy writer, Olyn Warfield knows how to tell a good story. She is a member of both the Virginia Storytellers Alliance and the James River Writers, and she has a special commitment to sharing her skills with children, the elderly, people with disabilities, residents in assisted living communities, and individuals in sheltering agencies. In June, a Linkedin article about SOAR365’s name change caught Olyn’s attention, especially the need for volunteers, and she quickly RSVP’d for an orientation. Now Olyn is very excited to present a storytelling activity for individuals in the Adult Day Services program twice a month. "I've been coordinating, entertaining and sharing storytelling programs for years, but I needed something positive and rewarding to look forward to on a regular basis. I am already enjoying myself so much and I have big plans and surprises in store for the precious individuals who step into my fantasy room, where all is well and life revolves around friendships and never ending adventures!"

Are YOU looking for something positive and rewarding to look forward to on a regular basis? To find out more about SOAR365’s volunteer opportunities, send an email to alison.jones-nassar@soar365.org today!

Great Volunteers Helped Make FallFest a Big Success!

Fallfest is one of two annual events hosted by our Next Generations Advisory Council (NGAC). It's a family-friendly fundraiser...
featuring food trucks, wine, craft beer, music, and good times. This year’s FallFest took place on a gorgeous Thursday evening in late October. 250 guests attended and more than $4000 in proceeds was raised to support the people we serve every day in SOAR365 programming. Our NGAC planning committee was out in force from start to finish to ensure that the event went smoothly. In addition, thirty awesome community volunteers donated more than 83 hours to assist with volunteer & guest check-in, traffic control, beverage service, water/snack sales, Halloween candy distribution, and raffle ticket sales (check out the pics on our Facebook page!). Thanks to everyone who made this such a special evening for the individuals we serve! To find out more about NGAC, send an email to Spencer Munro.

SOAR365 has two special events coming up in December and many volunteers will be needed to make them successful! These opportunities will fill up quickly, so send an email TODAY to alison.jones-nassar@soar365.org to claim your slot!

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**Community & Corporate Partners Serve Up BIG Impacts!**

SOAR365 is thankful beyond words to HandsOn Greater Richmond and Corporate Partner for mobilizing more than 60 volunteers who invested over 300 hours of service on Thursday October 10 to help spruce up Camp Baker! This hard-working volunteer team installed a 310 ft goat run, planted 100 plants and spread 15 yards of mulch, assembled 200 art/craft kits, hand-made 53 summer camp welcome banners, and painted 40 SOAR365 decorative cranes! SOAR365 can do amazing things for the people we serve when we have the support of amazing community and corporate partners - THANK YOU!

To find out more about individual and group volunteer opportunities, please send an email to alison.jones-nassar@soar365.org!

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**Hourigan Volunteers Donate Their Time & Skills to Camp Baker!**

On a cool Friday in early October, this hard-working team of Hourigan volunteers dedicated an entire day of service to upgrade Camp
Baker ahead of our grand opening! Thanks to the construction skills of these volunteers, we now have four new preparation tables, a new fence, a new enclosure for the picnic pavilion, and a lovely outdoor resting area that will be enjoyed by staff, program participants, and visitors alike!

Volunteers help the people we serve SOAR! To find out how to donate your time and skills to SOAR365, send an email to alison.jones-nassar@soar365.org!

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**Federal Reserve Volunteers Wrap Up Disability Awareness Month!**

This team of Federal Reserve volunteers wrapped up Disability Employment Awareness Month (October) with a wonderful service activity on October 31! Volunteers spent the morning interviewing individuals enrolled in our Workforce Development program and collecting information for their employment portfolios. These employment portfolios are tools that can be used to support individuals' efforts to identify and apply for suitable job opportunities, write resumes, prepare for interviews, and be successful as paid employees! Many thanks to these great Federal Reserve volunteers for taking time away from work to engage in this meaningful service activity!

To find out more about individual and group volunteer opportunities, send an email to alison.jones-nassar@soar365.org today!

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**Meet SOAR365’s VCU Service Learning Students!**

Each semester, SOAR365 serves as a partner site for VCU students enrolled in the Lifespan Developmental Psychology 304 service-learning class. Students in this class must complete 20 hours of service in addition to the course’s academic requirements. This semester, SOAR365 accepted a total of eight students, four of whom chose the Saunders Adult Day Services program, while the other four chose the Children/Youth Day Services at Saunders. Although most of them were somewhat nervous when they began, they have settled in, are learning a lot, and are all having great experiences! Let’s hear what they have to say:

**Jy’Kira Riley**

“I'm from the Eastern Shore of Virginia. I am now a
sophomore at VCU pursuing a double major in Political Science with a concentration in Civil Rights & Psychology. Eventually I'll attend law school in hopes of becoming an Immigration Attorney. **I love volunteering at SOAR365** and I love the bonds that I have made with the children. They are wonderful to be around and I enjoy sharing my Friday afternoons with them. The only ‘complaint’ that I have is that my time is coming to an end soon and I don't want to stop volunteering. **I am excited to continue being a part of the SOAR365 community as a volunteer every week once the semester is over and so thankful for this opportunity!**

Masar Ibrahim

"I moved here nine years ago from Tokyo Japan. I am a junior, majoring in exercise science, and ultimately I want to have my own practice as a physical therapist. **My service at SOAR365 is going great and I am indeed enjoying the experience a lot.** All the staff members are very friendly and so are the program participants. Every time I walk in on Friday during lunch I get lots of fist bumps and it makes my heart warm that they remember me and are opened up to me. **I have learned many things at SOAR365, but most importantly treating everyone equally with respect.**"

Jordan Devers

"I am from King George and came to Richmond in 2017 to attend VCU. I'll be graduating this December with majors in criminal justice and psychology. I am still deciding on plans for after graduation, but **I know I want to work in a field where I can give back to the community** and help others while doing so. While volunteering here at SOAR365, I have learned that there is no such thing as a disability. There simply are unique individuals who have different challenges than others. We all face obstacles, but **it is important to focus on the abilities you have and strengthening them - which is what I see happening here at SOAR365** each day I volunteer. Thank you so much for this opportunity!"

Ian Bridges

"My major is Psychology and I am finishing up my senior year at VCU. I am originally from Atlanta, Georgia, but moved to Virginia in 2009 with my family when my dad got a promotion at work. After I receive my bachelors degree from VCU, I plan on going to nursing school through Bon Secours. **I'm really enjoying myself and**
Jasmyn Le

“My family lives in Springfield VA. I wanted to attend VCU to expand my horizons and get out of my comfort zone. Now I’m in my third year, with a major in psychology and a minor in criminal justice. After graduation I want to become an Officer in the Navy and/or an Occupational Therapist for individuals with disabilities. **What I enjoy most about my service at SOAR365 is having the opportunity to interact** with the children and teenagers, and learning how each individual has a unique personality. It’s interesting to compare these experiences with the information that I am learning in class. Watching the supervisors and other staff encourage and teach important life skills will help the children and teenagers to become the best they can be. **It’s been very meaningful to be a part of this organization.**”

Marquez Mallisham

“I am a junior at VCU from Manassas Virginia, working on a degree in psychology. I’m still not sure what I’ll do after graduation but I know I want to help others in any way that I can. **I am truly enjoying my service at SOAR365.** I have been working with the adults as an art class assistant every Thursday and **helping them create art is the highlight of my week each week!** My service has taught me that we can all work together using our unique abilities and accomplish anything.”

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**Can You Contribute to Our Holiday Donation Drive?**

Each year SOAR365 serves more than 1300 individuals with disabilities from infants to older adults. You can make a difference this holiday season by donating new or very gently used supplies for use in programming:
Art & Craft Supplies including canvases, craft kits, non-toxic paints & brushes, markers, pipe cleaners, pencils, paper plates, string & yarn

Learning Materials including adult coloring books, card games, learning games, laminated placemats, puzzles under 100 pieces, balls, hula hoops, Legos, pool toys, colorful magazines

The deadline for Art/Craft Supplies and Learning Materials is January 17, 2020. To receive a full list of needed items and drop-off instructions, please contact Annual Fund Director Susan Herzick at susan.herzick@soar365.org.

SOAR365 is also conducting a Holiday Book Drive for children enrolled in our Pediatric Therapy Services. The deadline for books is November 29, 2019. Please see below for guidelines:

- New books only please
- Books should be appropriate for ages infant – 3 years
- Board, Chubby, and Touch/Feel books preferred
- Photos of faces & high contrast visuals preferred
- List of recommended books & delivery instructions available upon request

To find out more or donate books to Pediatric Therapy Services, please send an email to alison.jones-nassar@soar365.org!

Help SOAR365 Reach Number One!

SOAR365 is now ranked SECOND in fundraising for the 2nd Annual 12 Bars of Charity RVA event! This event will take place on Friday December 13 from 8pm - 12am and it’s a great way to support SOAR365 while responsibly enjoying a social evening with friends, family, coworkers and everyone else! Each supporter receives a team colored sweatshirt (SOAR365 is the Maroon Team), free admission and transportation to the participating bars and drink specials. $15 of every admission goes to the team’s charity and the charity with the most team members receives a $1,000 bonus!

To join the party, help us reach our goal, and keep us in first place, purchase your ticket TODAY by clicking here. And don’t forget to share with family and friends as well!

More Ways To Serve SOAR365!

At SOAR365, the forecast for volunteering couldn’t be better - sunny with 100% chance of meaningful service! New service opportunities are being identified every day in order to fulfill our vision of becoming “Best in Class” and volunteers
How Can YOU Help Us SOAR?

How do YOU fit into the big SOAR365 picture? Find out by RSVPing now to attend a general orientation. This session will provide interested volunteer candidates with a general overview of SOAR365’s mission, vision, values, and programs as well as information on available volunteer opportunities, the volunteer application process, and next steps. General orientation is mandatory for all individual volunteers so the sooner you start, the sooner you’ll be ready to serve!

Volunteer Orientation Schedule:
- Saturday November 9 from 10-12
- Wednesday November 13 from 5:30-7:30
- Wednesday December 11 from 5:30-7:30
- Wednesday December 18 from 5:30-7:30

To RSVP for a session, just send an email to alison.jones-nassar@soar365.org!